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Western Pacific Region

Date: August 19, 2025
Subject: WPR25LA222, Pilot Statements
Contact: John Macklin, Student Pilot

Email 8/19/2025 Pilot Statement (verbatim)

I am writing in response to your certified letter requesting information regarding the incident involving aircraft N630JM AutoGyro Cavalon 915iS, registered to Cedar Creek Aviation, LLC. I am the LLC's Member/President and Student Pilot who was flying the aircraft.

The incident occurred on July 14, 2025, at Hurricane, UT Municipal Airport 1L8, (General Dick Stout Airport). In this letter, you will see a detailed account of the events leading to the incident, as well as the supporting documents and data requested.

On July 14, 2025, I started a takeoff from runway 19 Hurricane Municipal Airport, UT, at approximately 10:15 am, on a solo flight intended to log additional personal flying hours. Weather conditions at the time were mid-nineties, mild crosswinds, clear sky, and dry runway conditions.

Summary of events prior to the Incident:

I completed the aircraft inspection using the Autogyro Checklist for the 915iS Cavalon; and I confirm that the aircraft, weather conditions, and myself were acceptable for flight.

PREFLIGHT Inspection - per checklist including:

Pre-Walk Around, Exterior Checks (clockwise from Pilot seat) Right Side Rear, Keel Tube and Propeller, Rudder and Stabilizer, Left side rear, LH Main Gear Spring Spar, LH Rotor and Mast, Passenger Station, LH Side, Forward Fuselage and Windshield, Cabin, RH side, RH Main Gear Spring Spar, RH Rotor and Mast. All items checked and aircraft were acceptable for flight.

PRE-START Inspection - Seats and Seat Belts, All Switches, Doors, Flight Controls, Weather Conditions, and Pilot Ready all checked and found acceptable for flight.

ENGINE START Procedure - followed as per instructions in Cierva checklist.

ENGINE WARMUP AND TAXI Procedure - followed as per instructions in Cierva checklist.

ENGINE RUN-UP- Procedure - followed as per instructions in Cierva checklist.

PRE-TAKE OFF - Procedure followed as per instructions in Cierva checklist and done accurately.

TAKE-OFF PROCEDURE - Procedure followed as per instructions in Cierva checklist.

TAKE-OFF RUN - Procedure followed as per instructions in Cierva checklist. The aircraft was at a full stop on Runway 19, ready for rotor pre-rotation. At 220 rotor rpm, I released the pre-rotation button, pulled the stick full aft, released the brake, and advanced the throttle. At 35 kts, I allowed the stick to move slightly forward from the aft position, allowing the nose wheel to rise slightly above the runway surface. I maintained the aircraft's position in the center of the runway and continued to slowly advance the throttle to 75%, and I estimate the speed was 70 kts. The aircraft began to shudder, and the ride felt as though it was on rough asphalt. I reduced the throttle slightly and it appeared that the problem was correcting. I did not let the stick move aft, because I was concerned the aircraft would pitch upward and the rear skid would contact the runway. I was approaching the last taxi exit from the active runway and was concerned about going off the end of the runway if I aborted the takeoff. Instead of aborting the flight, I then advanced the throttle, believing I could carefully bring the nose of the gyroplane up slowly and climb straight out for departure.

The roughness of the departure forward takeoff roll significantly increased and the aircraft started to angle toward the SE (left side) of runway 19. As I attempted to correct using rudder and stick control while opening the throttle to full power, the aircraft instantly pitched upward, and I could not see the horizon. I heard and felt a thump with two more subsequent thumps immediately afterwards. The aircraft started to rotate clockwise (right) and there was no time or ability to control it at that point. The aircraft landed on its right side and skidded down the runway and off onto the gravel adjacent to the runway, coming to a stop approximately ten feet from the East runway edge facing South.

CLIMB OUT TO ALTITUDE - was not attained.

When the aircraft came to a stop, I was aware that the engine was not running. I immediately closed the fuel shutoff valve to avoid any fuel leakage. I turned off Lane Switches A and B, Master Switch, Avionic Switch, Fuel Pump 2, Taxi Lights, Navigation Switch, Strobe Light, Inst Panel Switch, and Vent Switch. After confirmation that the Fuel Valve was closed, and the Master Switch and all electrical switches were off, I removed my Headset.

I unbuckled my seat belt and checked myself for injuries, then unlatched the left passenger door and pressed the door up to open for my exit evacuation. As I climbed out of the cockpit, I heard emergency rescue sirens approaching from the Northeast. At that moment, a witness of the accident approached and offered assistance as I was exiting the aircraft. My Apple watch had detected the impact of the crash and automatically contacted my emergency responder living in Wisner, NE., who knew I was flying in Hurricane. He received an Apple Watch Emergency SOS. The message text notification he received provided the map of the Hurricane Airport and the location coordinates of where the Gyroplane came to a stop. In turn, he called my wife in Fremont, NE, and the Utah Emergency Response to report the accident. Utah Emergency Response called the Hurricane Police to dispatch the Emergency Response team. At the scene, the Hurricane Police Department contacted the FAA and the NTSB to report the incident.

I am fully cooperating with the investigation and committed to providing any further details or documentation required. My intention is to aid in understanding the root cause of the incident and to contribute to the overall safety and integrity of aviation operations. I have scheduled additional classroom training hours with my CFI to thoroughly review this accident and improve my flying skills while completing my Sport Pilot License. Thankfully, I sustained only minor injury, and no other individuals or aircraft were involved.

Email correspondence on 8/21/2025**IIC follow-up questions:**

Regarding the checklist, it states under the takeoff run section to "set stick to take-off position"... can you please clarify that?

From your statement you moved the control stick slightly forward...

1. Are you able to qualify that...e.g. Was it closer to center or aft, was there any left or right input?
2. When you applied slightly forward cyclic input, do you normally advance the cyclic prior to lift-off or only under specific circumstances?

Student Pilot Responses to questions listed above (verbatim):

1. When the gyroplane checklist for Pre-Take Off procedures were completed and the doors were closed and latched, fuel pump 2 on, windsock checked, and the rotor brake switched from brake to Flight; I held the cyclic in the full forward position and announced over CTAF that I was taking runway 19 for departure.

I taxied into position on the runway with the cyclic full forward and stopped on the active runway by applying the handbrake. With the hand brake applied to prevent the aircraft from moving, I advanced the engine throttle to 2100 engine RPM's and pressed the rotor rotation button. When the Rotor speed was 100 RPM, I progressively increased the throttle to achieve a 240 RPM rotor speed. I then:

1. Released the rotor engagement button
2. Moved the cyclic control stick to full aft position
3. Released the rear wheel brakes
4. Advanced throttle for takeoff.

As the engine power was progressively advanced, the takeoff roll speed increased, and the wind increased the rotor RPM. At approximately 35 kts of roll speed, the front nose wheel started to rise from the runway surface, and I moved the cyclic forward to a neutral position to maintain the front nose wheel position off of the runway as the takeoff progressed. I used the cyclic and rudders as necessary to maintain the gyroplane in the center of the runway. As I progressively opened the throttle further, the takeoff ground speed and rotor RPM both increased.

The rear wheels normally lift off at approximately 55kts, when the throttle is opened to full and the cyclic pulled gently aft. After the gyroplane main wheels lift off the runway, a small amount of left cyclic is added to adjust for engine torque as the gyroplane transitions to climbout.

On this take off roll, instead of going to full power at 55 kts, I allowed the takeoff roll speed to continue to increase. I thought since I was approaching the end of the runway, the gyroplane would go airborne at a higher takeoff speed, and I would then carefully transition to climb out. The cyclic felt like there was too much pressure on it causing it to move aft. I tried increasing counter pressure with my hand in order to slow the aft movement of the cyclic. As I opened the throttle to full power, the gyroplane became unstable, pitched upward, and uncontrollably rolled to the right, and the accident occurred.

2. The takeoff roll begins with the cyclic in the full aft position, which pitches the rotor upward, so its RPM speed increases as the takeoff speed increases. At 35 kts, as the nose wheel starts to rise off the runway, the Cyclic is pushed forward to maintain the front wheel slightly off from the runway surface. The nose wheel must be managed in that position until the ground roll speed is approximately 55 kts and the rotor RPM at 300+. As full throttle power is added, the cyclic is then carefully pulled aft to allow the gyroplane to transition into climbout.

The cyclic is only pushed forward from the full aft position at 35 kts and then managed to maintain the position of the front wheel slightly off the runway surface. At 55 kts, the throttle position is advanced to full open, and the gyroplane has enough forward takeoff speed and rotor rpm to transition to climb out.

If a special condition develops and the flight must be aborted, the throttle should be closed and the cyclic managed by moving it forward, while applying brakes, until the aircraft comes to a stop.